

The Examiner is respectfully requested to amend the above-identified application as follows:

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend Claims 1, 4, 13, and 14 to read as follows (a marked-up version of the amended claims, showing the changes made thereto, is attached). For the Examiner's convenience, Applicant has included all the pending claims below, as amended to date.

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1. (Amended) A decoding apparatus comprising:
 - a) input means for inputting a bitstream obtained by coding a plurality of object data in units of objects and multiplexing the coded data, wherein the bitstream includes management data for managing the plurality of objects, and the plurality of object data are hierarchized;
 - b) separation means for separating coded data of each object from the bitstream;
 - c) selection means for selecting a predetermined object from the plurality of objects contained in the bitstream;
 - d) outputting means for decoding the coded data of the object in accordance with the management data and outputting the decoded data; and
 - e) synthesis means for synthesizing the object data outputted by said outputting means.

2. (Not Currently Amended) An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein

the bitstream is a bitstream complying with MPEG4.

3. (Not Currently Amended) An apparatus according to Claim 1,
wherein
the bitstream input to said input means is scrambled, and said input
means comprises descrambling means for descrambling the scrambled bitstream.

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4. (Amended) An apparatus according to Claim 3, wherein
the management data is IPMP data that is not scrambled, and said
descrambling means descrambles the scrambled bitstream in accordance with intellectual
property data.

5. (Not Currently Amended) An apparatus according to Claim 3,
wherein
said apparatus further comprises read means for reading
descrambling data for descrambling the scrambled data, the descrambling data being stored
in an IC card, and said descrambling means descrambles the scrambled bitstream in
accordance with the descrambling data read by said read means.

6. (Not Currently Amended) An apparatus according to Claim 1,
wherein
said apparatus further comprises read means for reading selection
data for selecting the object, the selection data being stored in an IC card, and said
selection means selects the predetermined object from the plurality of objects in
accordance with the selection data read by said read means.

7. (Not Currently Amended) An apparatus according to Claim 1,
wherein

the plurality of objects include at least a video object.

8. (Not Currently Amended) An apparatus according to Claim 7,
wherein

the plurality of objects include at least an audio object.

9. (Not Currently Amended) An apparatus according to Claim 8,
wherein

the plurality of objects include at least a scene description object.

10. (Not Currently Amended) An apparatus according to Claim 1,
further comprising

monitor means for monitoring the object data synthesized by said
synthesis means.

11. (Not Currently Amended) An apparatus according to Claim 1,
further comprising

communication means for performing data communication with an
external device, said communication device transmitting, to said external device,
information representing that the bitstream is decoded.

12. (Not Currently Amended) An apparatus according to Claim 11,
wherein

said communication means performs data communication through the Internet.

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13. (Amended) A decoding method comprising the steps of:

inputting a bitstream obtained by coding a plurality of object data in units of objects and multiplexing the coded data, wherein the bitstream includes management data for managing the plurality of objects, and the plurality of object data are hierarchized;

separating coded data of each object from the bitstream;

selecting a predetermined object from the plurality of objects contained in the bitstream;

decoding the coded data of the object in accordance with the management data and outputting the decoded data; and

synthesizing the object data outputted in said decoding step.

14. (Amended) A computer-readable storage medium which stores a program, said program comprising steps of:

a) input processing of inputting a bitstream obtained by coding a plurality of object data in units of objects and multiplexing the coded data, wherein the bitstream includes management data for managing the plurality of objects, and the plurality of object data are hierarchized;

b) separation processing of separating coded data of each object from the bitstream;

c) selection processing of selecting a predetermined object from

the plurality of objects contained in the bitstream;

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d) outputting processing of decoding the coded data of the
object in accordance with the management data and outputting the decoded data; and

e) synthesis processing of synthesizing the object data outputted
in said outputting processing.
